



Family Gram  
CAMP  
FALLUJAH,  
IRAQ

TO THE SPOUSES, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE  
MARINES AND SAILORS OF I MHG:

I am writing to you from Camp Fallujah, Iraq where the Marines and Sailors of I MHG are again deployed. This letter is bitter sweet for me because this is the last letter I will have the opportunity to write to you as the Commanding Officer of this tremendous outfit. My change of command will occur on 17 June 04 and I will hand over MHG into the capable leadership of Col Jay Bruder.

I have had the opportunity over the last two years to lead the most dedicated and hardworking Marines and Sailors I have ever been associated. The demands on the command have been immense and All Hands have been an inspiration to me on their ability to be resilient, maintain their resolve and keep accomplishing the mission. When I think about what MHG has accomplished and what they have been through, I am humbled. I MHG has experienced two extended overseas deployments into active war zones and this in itself speaks to the uniqueness of the times we are in.

After 27 years of service in the Marine Corp I have had time to reflect on the privilege it is to lead Marines and Sailors and be part of the United States Marine Corps. It is a responsibility with great demands, but with the responsibility, comes greater rewards. I am grateful for the opportunity to have been part of a group of dedicated Marines and Sailors who are serving a purpose greater than themselves and making a positive difference. I realize that this is the last time I will command and this has weighed heavy these last few weeks. As you are proud of your husbands, wives, sons, daughters or friends I am also extremely proud of all of them. They are the best. The demands of combat build special bonds and we are currently a very tight unit. Whether serving at Camp Pendleton or Camp Fallujah, I MHG is a well functioning team and it is from this we gain our strength and toughness. Whether on the field of battle or on the athletic field of Pendleton, MHG has built a tremendous reputation for getting the job done. It has been a distinct honor and privilege for me to be part of this great unit. Thanks and Semper Fi.

Respectfully Submitted,

Semper Fidelis,  
Colonel John T. Cummings

# IMHG Newsletter

June 2004



## 7 vs. 12 MONTH DEPLOYMENT

Read here for the 411

To All, you might have read in the newspaper or heard it on the news that Marines serving in Iraq will be on a 12 month tour-**this is false.**

Mrs. Conway received a phone call yesterday from Gen Hagee to confirm to her and the spouses here that the Marine Corps will be sticking with a 7-MONTH rotation tour in Iraq. Request widest dissemination through out the MEF KVN

### **More clarification:**

I have received a number of calls concerning the above e-mail that was released by I MEF Protocol. For I MEF Command Element, I MHG and Marines in high demand/low density occupational field, such as Satellite Communications, Intelligence and Intelligence Analysis, (7) month rotational tour may not be possible. For Command Elements and Headquarter Units at the Regimental level and higher, (14) month tours have always been the planning guidance. I MEF however, is doing everything in its power to rotate individuals in these units after (7) months, which is dependant on the availability of personnel to accomplish a rotation. I MEF is still crunching the numbers to work the issue for Marines in high demand/low density occupational fields.

Col Kauer  
I MEF Protocol

### **"Q & A?" Section**

#### **Question:**

What happened to the videotape that our spouses recorded for us as dedication on Mother's Day that was suppose to be aired on Los Angeles news stations?

#### **Answer:**

The tape was mailed out 5/8 from Camp Fullujah, not going to be aired, but Msgt Grivas was informed from another Marine spouse that it exist and all that the tape pertains to will see it one way or another-MEF wants to make sure we see our dedication messages from our husbands.

Have questions? Ask Colonel Kauer.  
Submit to IMHG's KVC 760-500-2698  
[crawfordl@i-mef.usmc.mil](mailto:crawfordl@i-mef.usmc.mil)



## ARMED SERVICES YMCA

Presents:

OPERATION HERO AT MAIN SIDE

### FREE Mentoring/Tutoring Program

Operation Hero is an after-school mentoring and tutoring program aboard Camp Pendleton. We will be opening our newest site at Main Side. This program is offered at NO charge to military families, and it is designed to address issues faced by many of our military youth (Grades 1-5):

Military Moves

Deployment of Parents

Feelings of Isolation

Feelings of Self Doubt or Low Self Esteem

Classes meet twice a week for 2.5 hours.

This program has proven to be a great success. If you would like more information or would like to enroll your child please contact:

Estella Garrison,

Program Director at the YMCA

Phone # (760) 385-4921

SPACE IS LIMITED

Operation Hero Main Side Bldg. 13131

(Located in the back of the building)

♦♦

Marine & Family Services web cite:

[www.mccscamppendleton.com](http://www.mccscamppendleton.com)

Jim McDaniel Information and Referral Coordinator

Marine and Family Services, MCCS Bldg 13150

(760) 725-6090 or (760) 725-3400

(800) 253-1624

### US POSTAL SERVICE

OFFERING FREE packing materials to spouses & families of military member

**TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS SERVICE CALL:**

1-800-610-8734, Option #3

**SEND YOU FREE** boxes, packing materials, tape and mailing labels

- Boxes 12x12 and 8" in depth.
- 25 boxes/ carton

♦♦

**DELMAR FAIR JUNE 11-JULY 4**

**FREE TICKETS**

For families of Deployed Marines

**Tickets call Laura 760-500-2698**

### **Subject: Suspicious phone calls to spouses of deployed soldiers**

A spouse in a MDNG Family Support group reports that she knows of several wives of deployed soldiers who have received telephone calls from Baghdad from someone claiming to be a CID agent. The caller claims they need information from the wives about their husbands such as location in Iraq, how often they move, how often they call home, when their deployment began and when they're due home, and what specific unit they are in. The callers have no Arabic accent and already had the soldier's full name, rank and social.

Any spouse receiving such a call should contact their spouse's unit Rear Detachment as soon as possible to report the call and not give any information what so ever to the caller. The reporting spouse surmises that soldiers who use the local rental phones in Iraq can be targeted as the number they call may be saved in some way.



## IMEF BEACH PARTY

For families of deployed Marines/Sailors

**FOOD, FUN, FREE!!!**

*Please bring chairs and blankets to sit on*

**JUNE 19, 2004 12:00-16:00**

**DEL MAR BEACH, CAMP PENDLETON**

## ATTENTION SPOUSES

Of Deployed Marines

IMHG, IMEF is hosting a

**Reunite, Readjust & Rediscover** workshop

**On July 14, 2004 at 6pm**

At Sharky's O'Club-Childcare Provided

**SAVE THE DATE!** This will be a fun, exciting and NEW way to prepare for the homecoming of our marines. You don't want to miss it!!!!!!

## FREE PADRES TICKETS

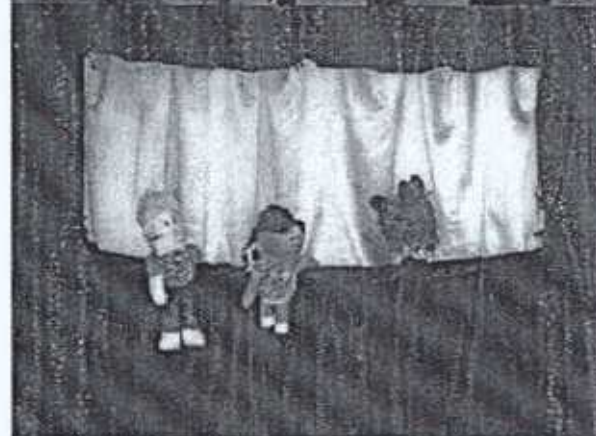
For families of Deployed Marines

Includes round trip to Petco Park, Food, T-shirts for the kids and special military seating!!

**Tickets Call Vanessa 760-430-8438**

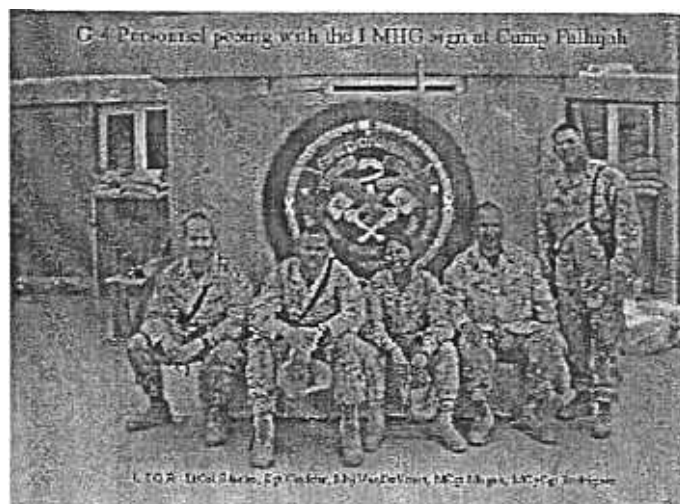
I MEF Family Fun Day  
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM II  
May 15, 2004

*Thank You to all the Marines who participated in the events that took place that day to help the families of the deployed Marines have a cherished day*





I MHG WISHES  
ALL MARINES/SAILORS  
Happy Father's Day  
June 20, 2004



**The Art of Coming Home**  
**By**  
**Chaplain Emilio Marrero, Jr.**

I MHG recently crossed a simple milestone for many – we reached our 90<sup>th</sup> day and that qualified us for the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon. With this milestone comes another milestone – being almost halfway done in our deployment for those designated to be here for seven months.

It may seem like a long time away but in reality its not and with this is also the reality that the return takes as much, if not more, preparation than the departure. To this end Headquarters Marine Corps in conjunction with the Chief of Chaplains office, Medical, Mental Health and Marine Corps Family Team Building have dedicated a great deal of research, time and effort towards designing a series of programs to address the issues associated with the uniqueness of coming home from an operational deployment.

Over the next two months I want to dedicate some time through these articles to share the different programs offered to Marines, sailors and their families and hopefully to answer a few questions in the process. I hope it will also generate questions or concerns that we can address for you.

In the past twelve years the Marine Corps has been steadily involved in “real-world” operational deployments, often involving combat. This shift from training deployments where Marines would visit other countries and engage in training and showing the flag exercises has presented us with a new demand – helping the Marine and sailor return home from an operational tour and transitioning back into the routine of life at home.

A program designed to accomplish this was researched and outlined over the past three years but received widest recognition last year when I MEF prepared to return from Operation Iraqi Freedom. The program is known as Warrior Transition. It was designed by the Chief of Chaplains office in conjunction with Headquarters Marine Corps and the assistance of a few scholars in the field of combat stress.

This program is designed for the returning Marines and sailors. It is meant to be the first lifeline in a series of resources available to help our troops make a healthy transition home.

Allow me to briefly explain what this program is by first outlining what it is not – Warrior Transition is not therapy, or treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or Critical Stress Debrief (directed counseling usually provided after a traumatic incident in civilian environment). Warrior Transition is an interactive, educational brief provided by the chaplain to express three major issues – thank you for your service, permission to review and talk of their experiences, and assurance that we have resources dedicated to help our returning troops in the event they need a little more assistance.

Warrior Transition always begins with the chaplains noting that the Commandant of the Marine Corps has explicitly asked us to thank the Marines for their service and sacrifice. No involvement is too small or deserving of being belittled or taken for granted – everyone in an operational deployment has made a tremendous selfless sacrifice we wish to honor.

In the brief we then focus on helping the Marine or Sailor begin to accept the conditions and reality they have experienced. We invite them to share their experiences and to highlight the things that have impacted them. The things you remember the strongest are the things that will stay with you – so we ask them to recall their experiences during the deployment and ask themselves, “What did I experience?”

A special note on this issue – not all impactful experiences that influence our troops during a deployment take place on the fields of combat. On many occasions the toughest things to accept after a long arduous deployments can be events and issues that came up at home while they were away – a broken relationship they could not mend, the death of a family member or friend, a special event missed or financial burden. While it is true that for the majority it will be an experience in the field but we need to keep our options and understanding open.

What Warrior Transition intends to do with the Marines is grant them permission to embrace their experiences as their own so they can then understand how they were impacted by them and affected by them. A point made in the brief is that we are all affected by the deployment – some more than others.

In the end our goal is to help our returning Marines to confront openly their experiences by talking with peers, fellow combatants, fellow Marines and sailors so that they do not bottle up their emotions. While this is key to a healthy transition it is very important for family members to understand that forcing their Marines to talk about their events is not healthy. It has to be done in an open environment where the Marine feels comfortable.

The other reality is that many Marines have such a strong sense of mission and resolve that they are already at peace with their actions and do not feel grossly impacted by the events. They could very well be quite forthright by saying, “I’m doing fine.” Take their word.

In the Warrior Transition brief they are also introduced to some of the signs that may be indicators that they are not transitioning well, such as: relationship problems (not interacting according to their normal patterns), apathy or doesn’t care about things like getting to work on time or obeying the rules, patterns of abuse (emotional, physical, alcohol, drugs or sexual), radical behavior changes, loneliness, addictions, rage, depression, sleeplessness, nightmares, or night sweats. Ongoing observation of someone experiencing a few of these symptoms means that they need some help dealing with their transition back to “normalcy”.



**I MEF HEADQUARTERS GROUP  
I MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE  
CAMP FALLUJAH, IRAQ**



**Message From The Commanding Officer**



**TO THE SPOUSES, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE MARINES  
AND SAILORS OF I MHG:**

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Respectfully Submitted,

Semper Fidelis,  
Colonel John T. Cummings



*The Commanding Officer of I MEF  
Headquarters Group, requests the  
pleasure of your company at the Change  
of Command Ceremony at which Colonel  
John T. Cummings will be relieved by  
Colonel Joseph A. Bruder, IV on  
Thursday, the seventeenth of June, two  
thousand and four, at ten o'clock in  
Building 26, Camp Fallujah, Iraq*

*Uniform: Utilities*